

(b) Notwithstanding Chapter 324, Health and Safety Code, as amended by this Act, a freestanding emergency medical care facility is not required to comply with Chapter 324, Health and Safety Code, until January 1, 2016.

SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

Passed the Senate on April 16, 2015: Yeas 30, Nays 1; the Senate concurred in House amendment on May 18, 2015: Yeas 30, Nays 0; passed the House, with amendment, on May 12, 2015: Yeas 138, Nays 5, two present not voting.

Approved May 28, 2015.

Effective September 1, 2015.

SPECIAL THREE-JUDGE DISTRICT COURTS CONVENED TO HEAR CERTAIN CASES

CHAPTER 186

S.B. No. 455

AN ACT

relating to special three-judge district courts convened to hear certain cases.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas:

SECTION 1. Subtitle A, Title 2, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 22A to read as follows:

CHAPTER 22A. SPECIAL THREE-JUDGE DISTRICT COURT

Sec. 22A.001. **ELIGIBLE PROCEEDINGS.** (a) *The attorney general may petition the chief justice of the supreme court to convene a special three-judge district court in any suit filed in a district court in this state in which this state or a state officer or agency is a defendant in a claim that:*

(1) *challenges the finances or operations of this state's public school system; or*

(2) *involves the apportionment of districts for the house of representatives, the senate, the State Board of Education, or the United States Congress, or state judicial districts.*

(b) *A petition filed by the attorney general under this section stays all proceedings in the district court in which the original case was filed until the chief justice of the supreme court acts on the petition.*

(c) *Within a reasonable time after receipt of a petition from the attorney general under Subsection (a), the chief justice of the supreme court shall grant the petition and issue an order transferring the case to a special three-judge district court convened as provided by Section 22A.002.*

Sec. 22A.002. **SPECIAL THREE-JUDGE DISTRICT COURT.** (a) *On receipt of a petition under Section 22A.001, the chief justice shall order a special three-judge district court to convene and shall appoint three persons to serve on the court as follows:*

(1) *the district judge of the judicial district to which the original case was assigned;*

(2) *one district judge of a judicial district other than a judicial district in the same county as the judicial district to which the original case was assigned; and*

(3) *one justice of a court of appeals other than:*

(A) *the court of appeals in the court of appeals district in which the original case was assigned; or*

(B) *a court of appeals district in which the district judge appointed under Subdivision (2) sits.*

(b) *A judge or justice appointed under Subsection (a)(2) or (3) must have been elected to that office and may not be serving an appointed term of office.*

(c) A special three-judge district court convened under this section shall conduct all hearings in the district court to which the original case was assigned and may use the courtroom, other facilities, and administrative support of the district court.

(d) The Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System shall pay the travel expenses and other incidental costs related to convening a special three-judge district court under this chapter.

Sec. 22A.003. **CONSOLIDATION OF RELATED ACTIONS.** (a) In this section, “related case” means any case in which this state or a state officer or agency is a defendant that arises from the same nucleus of operative facts as the claim before a special three-judge district court under this chapter, regardless of the legal claims or causes of action asserted in the related case.

(b) On the motion of any party to a case assigned to a special three-judge district court under Section 22A.002, the court by order shall consolidate with the cause of action before the court any related case pending in any district court or other court in this state.

(c) A case consolidated under Subsection (b) must be transferred to the special three-judge district court if the court finds that transfer is necessary. The transfer may occur without the consent of the parties to the related case or of the court in which the related case is pending.

Sec. 22A.004. **APPLICATION OF TEXAS RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE.** (a) Except as provided by this section, the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure and all other statutes and rules applicable to civil litigation in a district court in this state apply to proceedings before a special three-judge district court.

(b) The supreme court may adopt rules for the operation of a special three-judge district court convened under this chapter and for the procedures of the court.

Sec. 22A.005. **ACTIONS BY JUDGE OR JUSTICE.** (a) With the unanimous consent of the three judges sitting on a special three-judge district court, a judge or justice of the court may:

- (1) independently conduct pretrial proceedings; and
- (2) enter interlocutory orders before trial.

(b) A judge or justice of a special three-judge district court may not independently enter a temporary restraining order, temporary injunction, or any order that finally disposes of a claim before the court.

(c) Any independent action taken by one judge or justice of a special three-judge district court related to a claim before the court may be reviewed by the entire court at any time before final judgment.

Sec. 22A.006. **APPEAL.** (a) An appeal from an appealable interlocutory order or final judgment of a special three-judge district court is to the supreme court.

(b) The supreme court may adopt rules for appeals from a special three-judge district court.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

Passed the Senate on May 4, 2015: Yeas 20, Nays 11; passed the House on May 19, 2015: Yeas 95, Nays 50, two present not voting.

Approved May 28, 2015.

Effective September 1, 2015.